"Truth Is One, Men Call It By Various Names." —RIG VEDA

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Message of the East

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BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

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Message of the East

"And behold the glory of the God of
Israel came from the way of the East."
—*Ezekiel*
"Light shall come again from the East."
—*Tyndall*

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THOUGHTS OF THE BUDDHA

From the Dhammapada

Earnestness is the path of immortality, thoughtlessness is the path of death. Those who are in earnest do not die; those who are thoughtless are as if dead already.

By rousing himself, by earnestness, by restraint and control, the wise man may make for himself an island which no flood can overwhelm.

Even the gods envy him whose senses, like horses well broken in by the driver, have been subdued; who is free from pride, and free from appetites; such a one who does his duty is tolerant like the earth, or like a threshold; he is like a lake without mud; no new births are in store for him.

His thought is quiet, quiet are his word and deed, when he has obtained freedom through true knowledge, when he has thus become a quiet man.

He who holds back rising anger like a rolling chariot, him I call a real driver; other people are but holding the reins.

Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth!

Not to blame, not to strike, to live restrained under the law, to be moderate in eating, to sleep and sit alone, and to dwell on the highest thoughts — this is the teaching of the Awakened.

UNIVERSAL MESSAGE

Whatever devotee seeks to worship whatever Divine form with faith, I (the Supreme) make his faith unwavering. Possessed with that faith, he engages himself in worship of that deity; and from that he gains the desired results, those being granted by Me alone.

—*Srimad Bhagavad Gita*

Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

—*Jesus the Christ*

No decrying of other sects . . . no depreciation of others without cause, but on the contrary, a rendering of honor to other sects for whatever cause honor is due. By so doing, both one's sect will be helped forward, and other sects benefited; by acting otherwise, one's own sect will be destroyed in injuring others.

—*Rock Inscriptions of Asoka*

The religious spirit is in us. It preceded the religions, and their task as well as that of the prophets, of the initiated, consists in releasing, directing, and developing it. This mystical aspiration is an essentially human trait. It slumbers at the bottom of our souls awaiting the event, or the man capable, in the manner of an enzyme, of transforming it into true mysticism, into faith.

—*Pierre Lecomte du Nouy*

Seekest thou God? Then seek Him in man. His Divinity is manifest more in man than in any other object. Look around for a man with love of God that overflows—a man who lives, moves and has his being in God—a man intoxicated with His love. In such a man has God incarnated Himself. —*Sri Ramakrishna*

BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO MANKIND

By Swami Paramananda

(An address delivered at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass.)

"Let all things that breathe—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path! . . .

Let all women and all men, all Aryans and non-Aryans, all gods and all men, and they that have fallen into lower spheres of life—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness — move forward freely, each in his own path!

In the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, let all beings that are—without enemies, without obstacles, overcoming sorrow, and attaining cheerfulness—move forward freely, each in his own path!"

This ancient prayer, this Buddhistic prayer, conveys the spirit of Gautama Buddha, of his teaching and of the influence his teaching left throughout the length and breadth of India. It represents his attitude and the attitude of his immediate followers.

Buddhism was not looked upon in India as anything peculiar. Its rise was not, as many people imagine, the sign of a radical change from the ancient ideals of the Indo-Aryans or Hindus, as you call them. On the contrary, it sought to revive some of the ideals which with time had lost their original meaning and significance; and that is the purpose of any reform work. Only short-sighted people think that a genuine reformer comes with a zeal to destroy in order to enforce his own ideas. As far as I can observe from my study of Lord Buddha's life,

there was no condemnation. There can be none in the life or teaching of any great teacher. It would be a contradiction.

There were once two learned men who approached Buddha. They came disputing and arguing, each trying to prove that his particular faith was the best. Buddha listened to both of them, then he asked, "What does your religion teach?" One at a time they defined the basic conceptions of their religion, each expressing the same faith in an all-loving and Almighty God and in the precepts that it is wrong to harm anyone, and that the noblest thing men can do is to love and be charitable toward one another. The Buddha said, "Why do you not do these things then? Does your religion teach you to be unkind and quarrelsome? Why does not each of you live up to the spirit of his faith, for only through the life will you be able to prove which faith is the best?"

I think this sums up the whole theme of Lord Buddha's philosophy and religion, in fact of all genuine religion. The truth that it contains is not limited to any one locality or to any period of time. It is as true today as it was then—500 years before the Christian era, and even before that—because here we are dealing with human problems, and human problems have always been the same. It is not the theory, the dogma, the creed that can ever solve them. They are solved through the living example. The man who is able to bring this vivid, living example to mankind through his own life and action, enriches the whole world. That is what Buddha did, what he gave; and his gift still abides.

Whether you are a Buddhist or not makes very little difference. You certainly can draw inspiration from his noble thoughts and utterances, because they are as broad

as the sky overhead; they have no boundary lines. I doubt that Buddha ever gave birth to a creed. It would be difficult for me to define to you the creed of Buddhism; it is so interwoven with all the ideas which preceded it. He did, however, lay a very great emphasis upon non-injury, and this spirit we find pervading the consciousness of India. Non-killing, non-injuring is the best, the highest, the greatest of all religions. The idea did not originate with Buddha, for Truth is eternal. It existed long before.

In one of the Indo-Aryan scriptures we find simply stated a definition of the moral law upon which all people can agree and which sums up the belief contained in all the great scriptures. "To harm anyone is sin, to do good is virtue." Anybody taking only the letter of this truth that non-injury is the highest religion might become a vegetarian, thinking that in that way he was complying with this great law. But unless his heart is free from all unkind, uncharitable, petty, jealous and hateful thoughts, his abstinence will benefit him little. Therefore we cannot say that this is a greater message than any other, for it all depends on how we apply it. It did, however, become the theme of the teaching Buddha gave to the world, and by which he sought to undermine any benefit which might be gained through ostentation in religion, or hypocrisy. That is where trouble so often lies—in our desire to make a display of our faith, and accent our differences. How much better to follow what the Buddha taught the men who came quarreling: Live your religion, only then will you find its fulfillment.

In India, if we can lay emphasis on any one fundamental principle, it is this: Religion does not consist in books, in rituals, in the study of the scriptures or in intellectual reflections. Religion is being and becoming. A man is

great not because he proclaims his greatness, but because he manifests it through his life, as we see in the example of Lord Buddha. When he sent out his followers to spread the gospel that he had evolved, it was with this command: "Go forth O Bhikkus, O monks, for the good of many, for the happiness of many, out of compassion for the world. Do not strike anyone, do not blame anyone. Among those who hate, live free from hatred. Let love be the dominant element in your hearts." Now there is no one who can find fault with that, because we all recognize that love is the supreme factor in existence. But merely talking about love and writing books about it is a far distant approach to actually living it. Buddha knew this well through his own great realization. He had followed all the organized systems in his earlier life, and had walked those paths which were said to lead to the goal. But he finally came to know that the essence of spirituality was not to be found on the outside; it lies in man's own life. He must live it, he must feel it. Spiritual awareness begins with living and feeling. Wherever this livingness is experienced, there all sense of separateness melts away. One no longer can distinguish the followers of the different religions as distinct from one another, calling one a Christian, one a Buddhist, another a Jew, because in the light of true vision they come together in a blending harmony and are seen as one. The man, however, whose religion is a matter of theory and not practice, takes delight in comparing one creed with another, and approaches other religions than his own in a fighting, critical spirit.

Buddha's idea never was to destroy that wonderful system of philosophy and religion which had existed hundreds of years before he was born. If he had any re-

bellion in his heart it was not against that; it was against the misconceptions which had grown up around it. For instance, there was the simple Sanskrit text which stated, "Let every man bring before the altar of Divinity the animal in him, and sacrifice it." Sanskrit language is a most profound language, and can be interpreted in more than one way. So with this text; it can be understood differently. Thus some men chose to take it literally because they found it simpler to bring goats and other animals to be sacrificed, than the beast within. By doing so they felt that they had fulfilled the command. But the scriptural injunction was that every man should kill the animal within himself—that is, the hate, the jealousy and all that is productive of evil. Let him slay these before the Mother of the universe, so that he may be freed, so that he may become a proper instrument in the Divine Hand.

If you will investigate you will find that all organized religions are apt to lay their accent on the outer symbol rather than upon the inner Truth, because the inner Truth is so much more difficult to attain. In order to grasp it a man must deny himself, and he must do this by himself, for Truth is not dependent on any priest. That is how the Hindus realized that the essence of religion could never be attained through priestcraft. Religion becomes a matter of priestcraft when you merely cling to some religious system that is handed down to you. Real religion we cannot inherit though people think they can. It must be the result of our own yearning and evolution, the product of our feelings and thoughts. It represents the nearest approach we can make to our Ideal. This marks the beginning of our religious experience. It does not make much difference what other people say or think,

or what the Bibles predict. Unless we bring our ideals close to our heart and life, our faith will not stand up under stress; we shall lose it, for borrowed belief cannot be a substitute for direct experience.

Actually religion cannot be borrowed. That is a fact which Buddha brought out most forcibly through his life. He gave himself for this realization. He renounced everything in order to obtain the supreme vision. Many people have interpreted his renunciation as negation. I remember hearing a learned man state that this act of renunciation was probably the result of living in a climate where people do not have as much vigor and ambition as they have in the colder climates. It struck me as the most unspiritual explanation I had ever heard. As if people would give up love for all their material surroundings and love for all that they hold dear in this world (in the Buddha's case every comfort and luxury, gayety, happiness, friends, and above all his beautiful wife and his new-born babe) merely because the climate was a little warm. But that is the way many people study religion. They have no conception of what people of other religions are feeling or thinking, perhaps because their own faith represents to them only an outer expression of creed.

Please understand, I am not speaking in this way to uphold Buddhism. Last Sunday I spoke on Christ and His message. I give according to my own inspiration. Today I am moved to give the message which Buddha brought to the world and to mankind, as I understand it. I am not a Buddhist, nor do I profess Christianity, yet I draw great inspiration from the ideals of the Buddha and the Christ, and find very little to mark the difference between them. One and the same spirit pervades them as

pervades the universe and permeates the whole. Man everywhere struggles and strives to realize his ideals, but he has not the strength, he has not the power. Will it not help him then to look upon a figure who conquered the flesh and demonstrated with vivid reality the existence of the Spirit manifesting through it? Surely man cannot have too many examples and reminders. Buddha became the living expression of these universal ideals. In every line of his life we behold them. He came to earth for this purpose, to show by living example that Truth exists, that it exists in man's own heart. One who realizes this gives a death blow to all evil. But he must find this Truth for himself. Merely clinging to a dogma or depending on a priest will not give him a passport to heaven. It must be gained by his own strength.

This the Buddha taught dynamically, and in his teachings there is no negation. Yet there are those who think that Buddha's message is negative because he taught that men should seek to attain Nirvana. Nirvana is not negation. It is the highest state of illumination. When all materialism, all desires and all turbulences are made silent, then within the being of man a power rises above and beyond the limitation of the senses. There alone man may rest in the bliss of absolute vision. When, however, our vision is measured by our material concept, we say of Nirvana, "It is negative; it is self-annihilation." Would a message live so long if it were born out of complete annihilation? Nirvana, however, does mean the extinction of all that is vile, all that is productive of discord. In other words, it means the annihilation of the little self, the egotistic man who must die before the greater man can rise within him.

So from Siddartha the prince, the Buddha was born.

The name "Buddha" means not the person but "the Awakened One," just as the name "Christ" means not the personality of Jesus, but the state, the office, "the Redeemer." Both titles stand for certain universal principles and ideals. Whenever these ideals are not expressed in the life, but are confined in some creed or dogma, they become superstitions. Religion takes a morbid turn when it degenerates into a mere matter of clinging to the letter and the form. We do not do any good to the world or to ourselves when we go out fighting for our religion with drawn sword. The only way we can influence others is through our life. "Is this true today," you may ask, "when the world is so full of materialism?" Yes, the world today is in many ways just what it was in the past. Did the great ones then find ready response? Did not Christ and Buddha and other Master Spirits meet with enemies and opposition? Yet they fulfilled their mission free of any selfish motive or of any desire for applause from the public, or self-recognition. They lived for their ideal and they died for it, and that is the spirit which the world needs. The world would be so much the better for it no matter from what source the inspiration comes. As I have said, one does not have to be a Buddhist in order to become a close follower of the idealism that Buddha upheld. There is no need to profess anything, although we may do so if we feel that it will help us. Merely professing some faith, however, will not uplift humanity, will not bring a remedy for the ills of life.

Even after that wonderful message of Lord Buddha was given to humanity, humanity as always tried to bring it down to the ordinary level. While Lord Buddha was still alive some of his immediate followers sought to create dissension, and we find the same spirit among the

Christian creeds. Christ taught love—love thy neighbor as thyself, love thine enemies, forgive them; return good for evil. Buddha taught that hatred is never overcome by hatred but by love, that a man must conquer the liar by Truth, the greedy by liberality. He said, "Unto him who foolishly does me wrong, I shall return the full protection of my ungrudging love." There is no great difference between the Buddha's teaching and that of the Christ. It is the followers who create the difference. It exists for them because they judge only from the exterior.

There is a story told in this connection showing how an ignorant follower can misinterpret. It seems that a thief was once caught in the home of a Buddhist. Some of the younger people in the house started to beat him, but the master of the house interfered. He said, "Do not do that. Do you not know that according to the Blessed One non-injury is the highest virtue?" They said, "What then shall we do with this thief?" After pondering a few moments, he replied, "Put him in a barrel and throw him in the well!" On hearing this, the thief gave a mocking laugh and said, "I am overwhelmed by your mercy!" This is the way we so often do. We follow the letter, we repeat the words, but unless we try to make our life coincide with these ideals our inner littleness will betray us. This is the whole import of spiritual teaching, whether it be enunciated by Buddha or by Christ. When we live the life we find the direct road, and all sense of separateness melts away.

When a man has risen to a mountain top he doesn't see much difference between a small tree and a tall one. The same way it is in the realm of the Spirit. When we rise to the lofty height of spiritual reality all the differences between men and between religions seem to

disappear. Then it becomes possible for us to realize our ideals and to carry them out through living and not merely by talking. It is not just by organizing a society and calling it a universal brotherhood that we are ever going to establish brotherhood. It first must be established in the individual hearts. If we have the feeling, it will radiate to others and in that way the influence will spread. The same way it is with love. You must feel it, you must really believe in it, otherwise no matter how often you may repeat the word, it will do you no good.

Right here is the trouble with our modern civilization, and with our education, secular and spiritual. We think that if we follow outer forms and talk about them we shall have done our part. But that is only borrowed knowledge, and borrowed knowledge is dangerous, because it gives us the idea that we know all that there is to be known. When our knowledge is not made living through our lives, it becomes a mockery. That is true of everything. It is better for us to live than merely to talk. Living the life always means silent living. Quarrels, dissensions, fighting in the name of religion are possible only with those who have not touched the heart of religion. Sri Ramakrishna gives us the example of the bee. After it finds the heart of the flower it can no longer buzz; it becomes quiet. The same way it is with us. Whenever we find something true and vital within ourselves we become quiet. This does not mean that we are negative or passive, rather it means that we have made contact with the most positive side of our life. Those who have nothing to think about, no definite plan to follow, become scattered in their consciousness. Such people are forever expressing their opinions; but though they talk a great deal they actually have nothing definite to offer.

Running through the whole structure of Indian philosophy we find the idea of realization—its necessity. "Be like the pearl oyster," we are told. Every oyster does not produce a pearl, but according to an Indian legend, a certain type of oyster comes to the surface of the water in order to catch a special raindrop which falls from heaven at an auspicious time. After it has caught the drop, it goes down again under the sea and remains there until the drop has been changed into a pearl. The same way it must be with our spiritual life. After we have conceived an ideal we should allow it to grow before giving it expression, and we should grow with it. In this way our understanding of life will change. When we become seers and knowers, we take a different tone—all our turbulence, unrestfulness, unhappiness, doubts and fears vanish, once we find the light within ourselves. I do not believe we can settle any profound spiritual problems through discussion. No one has ever succeeded in doing it that way. Those who have any wisdom refuse to try. We can convince others only when we live according to our ideal. We convince them through love, but only when we feel love. No man, Buddhist or Christian, can truly worship God if there is a particle of hatred in his heart.

It is written that once the Buddha was surrounded by wicked men. They were employed by the priests who resented the fact that he was giving out the most profound truths to people in general without any distinction of caste or creed. Therefore they employed men to destroy him; but these men when they approached the Buddha with drawn sword, could not carry out their plan. There was so much love emanating from him that they were overwhelmed by it. Even today in the Indian forests you can meet mendicants who live there unprotected. Wild

animals come and sit by their firesides and forget their wildness. Why? You may say it is a miracle. Such men must have some strange power. Yes, they have power—the power of love. Because they have no thought of enmity, no suspicion, no doubt in their minds, they are safe. Animals feel these things, they respond to them. There is nothing supernatural about it. In fact it is the most natural thing in the world. Anyone can experience it. If you really feel this universal love and have no doubt or suspicion you will manifest this same power. It may not come at once, but that should be no reason to question its reality.

Our heart does not at once become harmonious with our ideals. Our thoughts and aspirations are formed from the accumulations of the past; consciously or unconsciously we have evolved them. We cannot at once change and control them. Therefore we must be patient. The ideal may seem almost impossible to attain, but let us not be faint-hearted! Today many are heartsick over the conditions in the world, but that does not help anything. Rather let us have faith in Divinity and faith in humanity. Some people may do wrong, some people may fail, but merely dwelling on the failure will not do a particle of good. Let us, on the contrary, trust in our fellow men, for only thus shall we be able to bring into the darkness a ray of courage, hope and inspiration.

One of the most marked things in the life of Buddha was the inspiration he brought to all people alike. It did not matter to him whether a man was high born or low born, whether he had merit or none, his teaching was the same: You can reach the Truth; nothing can stand between you and the Truth. No one can stop you from following the Truth! In his words was heard again the

mighty utterance of the Vedic seers: "Truth alone conquers; never untruth, never untruth!" He gave in this way because he was full of compassion and his compassion was not limited to humanity; it was extended even to the animals, and its influence we still find in India today. There are temples in India where animals are given food. Outside observers have accused the priests of animal worship, but they do not worship animals in the sense that they mean. They love them because they exhibit life. They are symbolic of the one all-pervading Power. Wherever there is life there is God, and if you destroy life your worship will not ascend to the altar of God, no matter in what form it is given.

At the time of Lord Buddha there was a great king, who in order to obtain Divine favor, ordered the priest to sacrifice hundreds of goats. I have already pointed out how this idea of sacrifice had been perverted and misunderstood. It is easier for a man to sacrifice a poor goat than to sacrifice something detrimental within himself, which is difficult to locate and hard to kill. Therefore, the king chose the easier way. The day of the sacrifice arrived, but just when the first goat was stretched out, waiting for the knife, the Buddha heroically approached the king and begged him to spare the lives of these innocent creatures. He even offered his own life in their stead. Here was not a creed, but the force of life itself—its loving expression. It was the Buddha's way of conversion and it proved potent. Because of the genuineness of his compassion, the sacrifice was stopped and the king became one of his followers. He desired to follow him not because of the force of his language or because he brought some new dogma, but because he was willing to lay down his life for his ideal. That is the test of a man's

religion. We may talk big things, we may say, "Love thy neighbor as thyself, forgive thine enemies," but if we yield to anger, hatred and ill-feeling, we merely make a caricature of our belief. We not only do not follow it ourselves, but we destroy the faith in other people's hearts. The greatest teaching that we can give along any line is by becoming the thing that we teach. Buddha's life to me was just that—being. He *was* his message. Let us also *be* the thing. Let us welcome whatever helps to bring us that illumination.

Today we have need of inward turning even though it may suggest a certain amount of quietude and passive quality. We are in need of it to balance our relentless activity. We rush headlong without thinking where we are going, and as a result, we have a nervous breakdown and involve ourselves in all kinds of confusion. It would be better for us to take a little time to reflect on these things of our inner being.

No matter what any Bible may say, that only is ours which we have made our own through direct experience. We cannot help but believe in what comes to us through revelation and which is the product of our own thoughts, meditations and feelings. The whole import of every true divine message is that no one can stand between us and our ideal. We are children of God, all of us. There are too many infinite Beings! Every man says his God is infinite. Christians say so, Buddhists say so, Hindus say so, Mohammedans say so, Chinese say so. All the isms of the world proclaim it. Can there be so many Infinite Beings? Is there not rather one Infinitude in which everything—all men, all creeds—is contained? Infinity means boundlessness and our only approach to it is through our own being. We have to make ourselves a part of it.

Religion is not something to be followed from a great distance. We must have immediate touch with it in our lives or it means nothing. Lip religion creates only confusion for ourselves and for others.

When a man talks about things of the spirit which he has not in any way realized, the result is that he is really expressing his own ignorance. For since he himself does not understand his subject, the result is that he feels far removed from the heart of it, and makes us, in turn, feel that it is something very distant—so distant that to attain it seems hopeless and not for us. Teachers of this type like to make themselves appear very big and important. Ostentation is ever the mark of the superficial mind. The great people, however, those who have realized what they teach, are simple and direct. With them is no ostentation. We find this simplicity in the life of Christ, in Buddha's life and in the lives of all the Master Spirits. They bring in the lesson of simplicity and directness in order that we may become simple and direct, for only thus can we reach the realm of Reality.

Let us therefore, forget the things that are non-essential in life. That is what renunciation means. Renunciation, however, does not mean following literally the step the Lord Buddha took. One may run away from all connections and go into a jungle and still find that his mind is tormented by his thoughts and feelings and afflictions. Renunciation means giving up selfish attachment and self-seeking. This we can try to do every day right in our own homes. We have many occasions in this world to renounce the evil and cling to the good. When we have learned to do this naturally and spontaneously, then the evil in us will have been overcome.

"Hatred is never conquered by hatred, but by love."

Buddha was all-compassionate; his heart was full of love for humanity, for all living things. For all men of all creeds, he stands as a living example of self-abnegation and self-elimination. The trouble with the ordinary man is that he is afraid to lose his little self, although both Christ and Buddha proved that only by losing one's self can one inherit eternal Being. The Buddha lived at least five hundred years before the Christian era, but his message still inspires us. His words bring us a ray of hope in the midst of our present darkness, and make us feel that if we live true to our ideal, even in a small way, we shall destroy doubt for ourselves and help to bring faith, hope, courage and renewed inspiration to our fellow men.

It is the life that counts. By our life we extend blessing and through our life we can extend curses. When we go about with a heavy, despondent, ignorant, selfish heart, we add to the weight of the world, the suffering heavy-laden world; and when we go about with an uplifted heart, full of cheer and illumination, we add to the world's light. Lord Buddha has been called the Light of Asia. Following his mighty example, can we not become the light of our own little environment, unconsciously radiating to those about us the life-giving influence of sincere aspiration, genuine humility and unselfish love?

Vary as it may in details and in the cosmological ideas associated with it, the doctrine of the selfless life is one, and easily recognizable in all its expressions. Its promulgation constitutes the one really great epoch in moral evolution, and is comparable in its effect to the Copernican revolution in astronomy and the remodelling of scientific method achieved in the period from Galileo to Newton.

—L. T. Hobhouse

THE WAY TO PERFECTION

By Sister Devamata

(An Address delivered at the Vedanta Centre, Boston, Mass.)

The selfish man can never be a strong man; but he may have a short-lived strength bred of the focusing of his energy. We all have far more energy than we dream we have. Even by one-pointed direction of our ordinary, everyday power, we cannot fail to achieve prominence or success. That is why the man who focuses his energies for selfish ends *appears* to be a strong man, with the result that many say it does not pay to be unselfish—only the selfish people get ahead. They go a very short distance, however, because the element of selfishness destroys the possibility of real efficiency. Swami Vivekananda says that our greatest work is done when we completely forget ourselves. There is a scientific basis for this statement, because the very moment we remember ourselves we have at once divided our forces by following two lines of thought at one and the same time, one going toward ourself, the other going toward our task.

What is true of work is true of love. The element of self-interest weakens love. The value of mother love lies in the fact that it is unified and wholly fixed on the child. The true mother asks nothing for herself: all she wants is to care for the child, to bear its burdens, to be patient with its limitations, to give and again to give. All she asks is not that the child make her happy, but that the child itself be happy and well and strong. No element of self-seeking enters into her feeling. She will go into a burning building to save her child.

Now this single-minded devotion is also the mark of the great scientist. No man ever discovered anything

concerning the hidden laws of nature if while he was leaning over his telescope or microscope, he was calculating how much he was going to make out of it, or what the world would think of him. No artist ever painted a genuine masterpiece if while he was painting it, he remembered his own glory or his own profit. Whenever that element of self-consciousness enters in, inefficiency comes along with it.

To lose one's self is to gain something far greater; yet man is so afraid of losing himself. Any teaching that tells us that we must wholly eliminate the self frightens us, and we say such teaching is dangerous. But if a doctor comes along with a new medical treatment which he tells us will remove poisonous germs from our system, we are not in the least frightened; we at once want to begin that treatment. Yet there is no germ so deadly as this ego which follows us about and enters into all our higher impulses, polluting and degrading them, which checks us when we would be heroic, and darkens our mind when it might be open to inspiration.

We must never forget that so long as the ego is predominant, God is silent within us, and that the very moment the ego becomes silent, God makes Himself manifest. Voice of God and voice of ego cannot sound together. Man cannot listen to both voices at the same time. Herein lies the reason for all our abortive efforts. If only we could realize that quite aside from the question of piety or goodness, even from the standpoint of success, of efficiency, of superiority along any line, we need to rid ourselves of our self-consciousness! Man is always awkward when he thinks about himself; he stammers and stutters when he would be eloquent. When he stands before people wondering what they will think of him, he is

dumb and foolish, but if he is able to lose himself in his subject, he is amazed at his own eloquence.

The question is: how are we to lose the self since the sense of I-ness is at the very base of our consciousness? The only way is to learn little by little to be aware of a Self that is greater than the self we now feel ourselves to be. We cannot blot out that lesser self, we cannot argue it out of existence, but we can expand it; and the way to expand it, especially at the beginning, is to transfer our consciousness to some other, some holier being. No one can ever see his own face; he can see only its reflection; so in the early stages of our higher development, we can never perceive the real, the true Self save by Its reflection in one who has realized Truth in his own heart. Each time that we read of a noble deed, each time our heart glows as we think of a Christ or a Buddha, each time there rises in us a desire to be like them, we are catching a reflection of our higher entity. Therefore we must keep our thought fixed on some pure and holy one who reminds us of what we inherently are.

In our reading, in our daily contacts, in our thoughts we should always be seeking the Highest. So many of our thoughts now rest on the level, wandering idly over the little river bed of our ordinary life, in a meaningless flow. In those empty moments we should go and stand, in thought, before our mental image of some Great One, in order that we may remember our own true being. Every one of us should have this inner ideal, so that at all times we can go and gaze upon it. Just as a vain woman in passing down the street, looks at herself in the glass of the shop windows in order to measure her appearance, so at every moment we should turn our thoughts to greater things in order to see how we appear in our higher consciousness.

It is by realizing our true nature, that is, by making it real to us, that we gradually expand our self-consciousness and lose the little self in the great Self. Nothing of value will be lost; nothing real will drop off; we need not be afraid. No one ever saw a man who was less of a man because he had forgotten himself. He is always more of a man because of it. Spiritual growth is not an exclusive growth; it does not cast anything out, but only glorifies and gives new meaning, new power to every part of our being. Now our senses betray us, but when our inner vision is clarified and quickened we shall hear more, see more, feel more. We shall go more deeply into the heart of things and shall perceive the Divine where now we see only the material. Every sense will be alert to catch a new beauty in God's universe, and to respond to it; nor will our intellect be blotted out. A man who is all-knowing from the spiritual level is not less reasonable than the man who is merely groping along purely intellectual lines; he is more reasonable, as a matter of fact, because he touches the source, the basis of all reason, the ultimate premise on which all reason stands. We merely complete ourselves when we forget the little self. It divides us now, like a house divided against itself.

Why should we want to be small and contracted, mean and petty when we could be mighty? Why should we want to be mere servants when we might be co-workers with God, co-workers with the great cosmic Power? Why should we want to be a mere half expression of what we are? Why should we want to be partial when we might be complete and whole? That is what the spiritual life means—wholeness; the supplanting of our self-consciousness by a mighty God or Divine Consciousness. It will awaken us so utterly, make us so alert that never can we be deluded or mistaken in anything again.

We are all better than we seem; we are all bigger than we can measure by our human stature; we are all loftier and nobler than we suppose ourselves to be. If we would only, even for one moment, remember that we are children of the Most High, if even a few times during the day we would remind ourselves that we are immortal, related to the Infinite and the Eternal, we could not then yield to such petty, finite, temporal troubles and complaints as now darken our consciousness. Why do we seek anything from the world when God will give us all of Himself just for the asking? That is, the whole of wisdom, the whole of power and light and love.

It is said that if we would but develop our lung capacity, we could take in six times more air than we are taking in today—six times the amount of oxygen. It is not that the air is lacking; it is that we refuse to breathe it in. So wisdom and power and love and cheer are not lacking; it is we who lack the will, the power to take them in in their fullness; but we can develop that power as we develop any other power. If we want greater muscular force, we use our muscles, we exercise. If we want greater intellectual force, we think harder, we study, we go where we hear of things which develop our mental capacity; and when we want to develop our moral power we go out and do loving and kind deeds. Thus when we want to develop our God-power, we concentrate upon it; we study about it; we ask concerning it; we pray for it and we cry for it—and it comes. No one has ever sought it in vain. The *Bhagavad-Gita* tells us that when one sets out on this higher path there can be no waste of effort, no loss of any kind. Even the effort that seems abortive is only temporarily so. The very thought of God opens us to God, and God pours into us His great Divinity in all its fullness.

Do not take my word for this, or the word of anyone else. Prove it for yourself. Convince yourself by looking back through the ages. Who in the past were the great ones? Not those who were physically great or who depended solely on their own frail power; but those rather who turned to the universal Power and manifested It. A famous painter was once asked, "How do you feel when you are painting a picture?" He smiled and replied, "As if I were not doing it." I think that if we were to ask any great man how he feels in his moments of greatness, he would say in the spirit of Christ: "Why do you call me great? There is only One who is great and that is God."

Why do we go on clinging to our littleness, suffering from it, smothered by it, full of unrest, when by a strong desire, by a burning longing, we could free ourselves from it? We must, however, first cultivate a taste for the loftier things by going to God in our thought, by seeking Him in His universe, by looking always for bigness in others, and steadily refusing to see littleness in them.

Every one has a noble side—find it. Everything has beauty in it—seek it. Refuse to contract your mind by small thoughts, by petty motives. If we can live for only a brief time each day in this loftier consciousness, we shall begin to cultivate a taste for God, and the very moment that taste rises within us, it will create such a hunger, such a thirst that we shall not rest until we have satisfied it wholly and completely. The man who loves music cannot stay away from concerts. He is willing to stand in line for hours on the chance of getting a seat; so when we truly begin to love God, we forget ourselves, our comforts and luxuries and even our necessities in order to draw close to Him; and the closer we draw the greater will be our longing until He fills us entirely with Himself.

Let us now in this quiet hour try to sense within us the Presence of that great Divinity. Our heart is, as it were, a shrine, and in that shrine is a holy, pure, all-perfect, all-powerful Being. It is there that we touch God in His purity. Within that shrine there is an inexhaustible supply of wisdom and love and joy, and it will bubble up and overflow just as the water springs up through the well when we tap the source.

O Thou Infinite One, let us not sell our heritage for a mess of pottage. Help us to see that what makes us great in the eyes of men, too often makes us small in the eyes of God; that what seems failure from the worldly standpoint may be success when seen with higher vision; and that what seems worldly success may be failure from the standpoint of the soul.

Help us to gain a new standard of life, a standard that is not based on mere opinion, a standard that is not measured according to the measure of men, but only according to the measure of God.

Help us to live no longer as man pleases, but only as God pleases. When we would question or seek counsel, let it no longer be from human lips but from the great Spirit within who sees not according to the finite and the fleeting, but according to the Infinite and Eternal.

Let us no longer, O God, concern ourselves so much for this little life of a day, but let us offer it up to Thee and be glad that our life is an eternal one, going on in an endless current, a part of the great cosmic life that never begins and never ends.

Help us to see our mind as one with the great cosmic mind, and therefore let us no longer think thoughts of a day that are but ripples when they should be great waves on the mighty cosmic ocean.

Help us to be willing to be accounted obscure and of little importance by men, and to find our joy not in standing before the multitude but by living silently as humble servants at the side of God.

Grant that we may never betray our ideal, and that we may never lose the opportunity that this life offers of moving Godward.

Teach us from this hour to consecrate ourselves anew to higher things, to be careful that we do not drag down others but that we lift all with whom we come in contact.

Teach us to be patient both with ourselves and with those about us, to be humble and tolerant and loving and, above all things, to give ourselves up wholly unto Thee, O Lord, and to forget ourselves in service to Thee.

Grant that as we struggle on the way, we may bring a little comfort and joy and help to our fellows, and that we may be channels through which Thy Divine blessing may flow upon the world.

May Thy peace, peace, peace rest not only upon us, but upon every living creature.

The great thing is to resign all your interests and pleasures and comfort and fame to God. He who unreservedly accepts whatever God may give him in the world—humiliation, trouble, and trial from within or from without—has made a great step towards self-victory; he will not dread praise or censure, he will not be sensitive; or if he finds himself wincing, he will deal so cavalierly with his sensitiveness that it will soon die away. Such full resignation and unfeigned acquiescence is true liberty, and hence arises perfect simplicity. Blessed indeed are they who are no longer their own, but have given themselves wholly to God. —*Francois Fenelon*

VEDANTA ON THE AIR

OPENING BROADCAST

By Srimati Gayatri Devi

"Friends, it is with reverence we dedicate our program, *Far Horizons*, to the work of Vedanta and to the Temple of the Universal Spirit at the Ananda Ashrama in La Crescenta, California—a centre of light, power and peace, founded in 1923 by the great spiritual leader, Reverend Swami Paramananda.

"Ananda Ashrama is a religious retreat and a non-sectarian place of worship.

"We introduce to you, as our guest speaker, Srimati Gayatri Devi, of the Vedanta Centre in Boston and Cohasset, Massachusetts, and acting minister at the Ananda Ashrama during the absence in the east of Sister Daya, the present spiritual head.

"It may interest you to know that Gayatri Devi is the only woman representative from India, engaged in the work of Vedanta in America."

Thus was inaugurated by Miss Olive Conway, a series of weekly broadcasts on the Vedanta philosophy, extending for a period of thirteen weeks. The title of the program, *Far Horizons,* had been used by Miss Conway previously on programs of her own, but most generously she extended its use to cover the Ashrama broadcast. Also she gave most valuable support, which, coupled with her enthusiasm, made the broadcasts possible. These programs were transcribed, the first record being made by Srimati Gayatri Devi during her visit to California while Sister Daya was at the Vedanta Centre at Cohasset, Massachusetts. After Gayatri Devi's departure, Sister Daya returned to her post in California and in the en-

suing broadcasts outlined some of the main features of the Vedanta philosophy.

The first programs were in the nature of a dialogue between Miss Conway and Sister Daya, later, owing to "other commitments," Miss Conway had to withdraw, but the programs went on to a successful conclusion.

Gayatri Devi's Address

Namaste, my unseen friends! I greet you in the manner of my homeland, India. Bringing together the palms of my two hands and holding them near the heart, I say, "I salute you or the God in you."

I come to tell you something about that ancient land and ask you to see it through my eyes. Shall we travel together on passage of time into her past, where history has buried its treasures?

Scholars and archæologists say that at the dawn of civilization, when men in Europe were wearing animal skins which, as you know, is a mark of barbarism, India was writing her books of philosophy. Endowed with keen intelligence and prodigious memory, our ancient forefathers, called the Indo-Aryans, plunged into the investigation of nature which held the key to secrets of the universe. They wanted to know the "why," "how," "wherefrom" and "what" of all they witnessed before their eyes, and sought, beneath the surface of things the answers to their enquiries. As a result of this research, India gave to the world her wisdom. This wisdom is contained in the literature know as the *Vedas,* which means Books of Knowledge. One of the four *Vedas,* called *Rig Veda*, is considered the oldest among the written works of man.

Here is the picture of India in those olden days. The country is fertile. Across the plains flow many large

rivers, fed by the melting snows of the Himalayas in the north; the soil is rich, and agriculture is an easy occupation. Can you not see men of brown bodies, scantily clad, in that tropical climate, walking barefooted through dusty roads or treading reflectively the narrow paths of thick forests? They bathed in clear, flowing streams that passed by their land and irrigated their fields. These early people of India tended the cattle by day, slept in the open, gazed at the stars by night, and their searching minds wondered and pondered about the mysteries of creation. They had found serenity and contentment in their leisurely way of living, so free from the struggle for existence. For them progress meant cultivation of mind and discovery of hidden laws of truths underlying life. What they discovered they told and taught others. We call these men *Rishis* or Seers, which means teachers or preceptors.

The language of the day was Sanskrit. All of India's ancient books are written in Sanskrit—not a spoken tongue any longer—but the mother and origin of many languages. It is older than Latin, Greek, Persian, Arabic: in fact, it is believed by most historians to be the oldest language in the world.

Sanskrit is very musical as a medium of speech. We intone the words, especially when uttering a prayer. Here is an illustration:

[Gayatri Devi chants]

Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya.

(Lead us from the unreal to the Real
Lead us from darkness to Light
Lead us from death to Immortality.)

In the beginning, the people of India associated God with forces of nature. Their imagination and gift of poetry flowered in the psalms and canticles, addressed to the many deities—goddess of Dawn, the Mother earth, the Sun-god, and so forth. Then we discover them in adoration of the Spirit whom they proclaim as One God, One Truth, One without a second. Let me read you some passages from the *Upanishads,* our Forest Books, which are considered the source of India's religion and philosophy:

"He who is in the fire and He who is in the sun, they are one and the same. He who knows this becomes one with the One."

"He is my Self within the heart—smaller than a corn of rice, smaller than a corn of barley, smaller than a mustard seed, smaller than a canary seed. He also is my Self within the heart, greater than the earth, greater than the sky, greater than heaven, greater than all these worlds."

This, in brief, is India's cultural, religious and philosophic background. Her message comes from the forest school or the mountain retreat, where thousands of years ago peace chants were first born, out of the stillness of the human mind, in the depths of nature's solitude. We hear the echo of that peace in our own hearts and send it out to the world with the prayer:

"He who is the Father in Heaven of the Christians,
Allah of the Mohammedans,
Jehovah of the Jews,
Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians,
Buddha of the Buddhists,
Divine Mother and Absolute *Brahman* of the Indo-Aryans—May He grant unto all, peace.

Peace, peace, peace be unto us and unto all living beings.

THE BAAL SHEM

By David C. Grindell

This is the story of Israel ben Eliezer, called Israel of Moldavia, who became known as the Baal Shem Tov, "the Good Master of God's Name." It is a story with many familiar motives to those of us who can thrill to the lives of the great torchbearers who come to glorify the spiritual life of their people or faith, no matter who or what these may be. The Baal Shem was such a torchbearer. Listen to his life and you cannot doubt that he belongs in the company of the truly great holy men of whatever period or region, of whatever race or religion.

Reformer or mystic, prophet or saint—what was he? These are mere tags or terms we apply to the geniuses of the spirit, the greatest geniuses. As with so many other figures, so with the Baal Shem they matter little; he seems to have been all of these things at once. What he did was to bring to the Jews of eastern Europe in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries an extraordinary upsurge of faith and communion and joy and exultation. Rapturous singing, enthusiastic dancing, rollicking story-anecdotes quickened the lives of his followers, the Hasidim. Verily, God seemed to descend from Heaven and live with them, to greet them in their everyday living and to share intimately with them even the commonplace round of their domestic and professional activities. That all this could come to pass was due solely to the power of the Baal Shem. Let us try to recapture some measure of the fire that flamed through the man and his followers.

Though he raised his torch high and shed much light,

his beginnings were lowly and obscure. We do not know just when Israel ben Eliezer was born; 1700 is the date usually given. And precisely where he was born is something even the scholars cannot tell us, for the village, named Okup or Akuf, has passed out of existence; it has been located variously in Bukovina or Podolia or Wallachia, that is, probably in what was once Poland but would now be part of the Ukraine. The parents, who according to all tradition were poor, upright and pious, died while their son was yet young in years. His upbringing had to be entrusted to the community among which they had lived.

Now it is always pleasing to the biographer of a saint to record marvelous things of his hero, starting right from the tenderest years. But however it may have been with the future Baal Shem, so much is certain; his community formed a rather poor opinion of him. Truly, he seemed an odd and unpromising youngster! What to make of a child who would not take his school studies seriously and showed no inclination to follow any respectable or approved calling? All the young Israel wanted to do was to run off to the woods or fields or hills and spend long hours immersed in solitary and blissful musings and meditations about one knew not what! They shook their heads gravely and passed him off as an ignoramus, unlikely ever to succeed in anything. Of course, they were judging him by rather worldly standards. The time would come when this lad could be judged by his own standards!

To give him some responsibility he was made to guide younger children to and from the synagogue. Very strange to the parents was the way they found this lad teaching their children prayers and explanations, showing them how to chant hymns and psalms with a fervor

the parents had never known. Next it was decided that he should be sexton at the synagogue—a duty which he performed with his usual lack of conventionality. Rather inactive by day, as it is told to us, he would lock himself in the synagogue when evening came on and sometimes spend the whole night pouring over books by candlelight or singing hymns to himself at the top of his voice, swaying with the rhythm. Hasidic lore delights to recount how, during these solitary nocturnal activities, he would occasionally be visited by angels or celestial beings, come to give him encouragement or to solve his problems.

Before long Israel moved to a place called Kuty where, despite his humble origin, unprepossessing appearance and lack of learning, he gained some recognition. He became known as a young man of clear and sound judgment, a good arbiter of disputes. He had winning graces of character; he had a harmonious temperament. One of those pleased with him was the rich and learned Ephraim of Kuty—so pleased, in fact, that he promised to him his daughter Hannah in marriage. But shortly thereafter Ephraim died without telling his daughter of this promise, and as for Israel, he did not show up to claim her hand until two years later.

The story of the wooing, a favorite with the Hasidim, is no doubt fairly typical of the young man. Hannah's brother, the famous and learned Rabbi Abraham Gershon Kutover, a recognized authority on the Talmud and Cabala, with whom she was now living, had opened the door to find standing before him a young man appearing to be only a shabbily dressed peasant, and had reached for some alms to present him before sending him off with God's blessing when what was his amazement to hear this young ragamuffin ask for his sister in mar-

riage and actually to present a paper to that effect, signed by his late father's own hand! The speechless brother could only imagine that he was dealing with a madman or an imposter. But Hannah, so goes the story, had the vision to see through the man's outward garb into his soul and soon declared herself ready to become his wife.

To save further mortification to his brother-in-law (who had dreamed of marrying Hannah off to a scholar) as well as to help along his own spiritual growth, Israel removed to a place between Kuty and Kassova in the woodland fastnesses of the Carpathian mountains, a region famed for its magnificent natural scenery. This was a place well suited to his purposes. He spent most of his time in solitary prayer and meditation, to which end he built himself a little log cabin deep in the forest. Seven years were spent here in the Carpathians. Some biographers claim that he read no books at all during this period; others assert that he did some studying. He would observe the fasts, sometimes going nearly a week without food. With all these practices, however, regular occupations were not given up: at first he dug lime from the soil and loaded it onto a wagon which his wife drove to market for sale. The wagon and horse, their only worldly possessions, were given to them by Rabbi Gershon. For a time he even tended a tavern, another gift of Rabbi Gershon.

If Israel had seemed rather ineffectual and impractical before, he now began to show some real accomplishments, even though they were of a very unusual nature. He had learned to discover the hidden properties of plants and herbs so that he could use them for medicinal purposes. He evinced healing power. It began to be noised about that this man could cure diseases, banish infertility and

do other remarkable things. The local peasants, Christians as well as Jews, began to troop to him. Even some fierce robbers who lurked in the surrounding mountain forests and lived by preying on hapless passers-by were astonished at the way this man was protected. They who had plotted to kill him could no longer harbor any evil thoughts against him.

By these activities he became known as a Baal Shem, a "Master of God's Name." This was the term for an individual who used incantations or wrote characters on amulets in order to effect cures, avert misfortunes and the like. It is conceded that the majority of them were charlatans. But the Baal Shem Tov, "the Good Master of God's Name" (some would have it the Master of God's Good Name), was a man of quite a different category. That he had remarkable charismatic powers is certain, but he was never a common miracle-monger. He came to be the healer, not merely of bodies, but of souls and of a great faith.

He moved to Miedzyboz in 1740 and there began his mission. The long years of preparation, during which he played before the eyes of the world the role of a simpleton, were now ended. Many had already become attracted to him, and his trips to Podolia and Volhynia, made while he was still living in the mountains, had increased his following. Where he had formerly spent much time alone, he now moved freely among the townsfolk. He mingled with all classes, making no distinctions, but it is with the humble folk that his ministry is most closely identified. Tailors and cobblers, teamsters and tavern-keepers; such made up the Hasidim. And not even the criminal or the prostitute had fallen so low as to be beyond the power of his regenerating love. A characteristic saying of the Baal

Shem was: "The lowest of the low you can think of, is dearer to me than your only son is to you."

But before we tell more of the prophet and his faithful, we ought to stop to take stock of the situation into which he was born. Holy men do not appear out of the blue merely to be an ornament to their society; they come to set aright definite evils and abuses which have crept into that society. If we look into the conditions prevailing in his time we can see that the religious life of the Jews was clouded over by three shadows; these shadows are, however, in no wise peculiar to the Jews, but represent three classical ways in which any faith can be vitiated.

In the first place, religion had become the patrimony of the intellectuals. One had to have a thorough education, one had to acquire profound knowledge of the right scriptures, so as to be able to bring forward a wealth of quotations and citations. The study of the Talmud was considered the most important religious activity. There was much wrangling and disputing among the erudite, much arid scholastic hairsplitting, or what is expressively called *pipul*. The Baal Shem ridiculed this type of Talmud scholar as "a man who through sheer study of the Law has no time to think about God." The result of this preponderant and one-sided intellectualism was that the masses of the people, who always prefer a simple and direct faith, nourished from the heart and not dissected by the brain, felt that their needs were not being met. Wide was the gulf between them and the aristocracy of culture and learning. Terms of scorn like *am ha-aretz* (ignorant man) were used of them. This epoch, too, had its Pharisees and Sadducees!

The third shadow was the appearance of false prophets. The first of them was the flamboyant Sabbatai Zevi

(1626-1676), who is said to have convinced sixty thousand that he was the Messiah. If Gregory Rasputin has perhaps come in our time to be the archetype of a kind of lurid religious mountebank, he would seem to be only a pallid understudy of Zevi. The theater of his activities, the eastern Mediterranian region, spanned three continents. Driven alternately between periods of fanatical asceticism and gross sensuality, Zevi claimed to be favored with wonderful millenial visions of future events, visions which he promptly had printed up in large numbers and sent off for the edification of his faithful. In a Europe cruelly devasted by the Thirty Years' War there were thousands to whom his prognostications offered thrilling glimpses into an imagined better future. Zevi's fantastic career of sham religiosity, unfulfilled prophecies and scandalous amours ended in conversion to the faith of Islam. Many Jews became Muslims or were otherwise lost to Judaism. Those who remained faithful were even so plunged into cynicism and disillusionment. This "Sabbatianism" had a particularly strong impact in Volhynia and Podolia. It should be recalled that Poland had become the haven of the bulk of Jewry from the sixteenth century. Finally, toward the end of the Baal Shem's life, there arose another pseudo-messiah, Jakob Frank, who caused a second apostasy, this time to Christianity. Lamented the Baal Shem: "As long as a diseased limb is connected with the body, there is no hope."

Now when the Baal Shem launched his mission he attracted, as we have said, large numbers of people. Not entirely from the lower classes, but also from the learned. Some rabbis were won over to his views—even Rabbi Abraham Gershom ceased to look upon his brother-in-law as a kind of imbecile and became himself one of the most

convinced and capable leaders of the growing movement. But he was overshadowed by the great figure of Rabbi Dov Baer, known as "the Maggid of Meserich," and often spoken of as "the Saint Paul of Hasidism." For that matter, the relation of the Baal Shem to Dov Baer is quite analogous to that of Sri Ramakrishna to Swami Vivekananda.

Baer had long been an ardent religious seeker but had found nothing to satisfy him. He was a brilliant mind, an excellent scholar, had mastered the Talmud and other Jewish scriptures. He followed the practice of the Lurian Cabala and used to pray with tearful mourning and abject self abasement. Such was the custom then; the religion of that time had no place for rejoicing. Baer fasted so rigorously that his health at length failed him. Possibly for this reason, as some think, he was a cripple.

When it was suggested that he go to see the Besht (as the Baal Shem Tov was also known, from the initials of these words), he gave a scornful answer to the effect that it was unlikely that this uncultivated rustic could do anything to help one like himself. Nevertheless, he went. But for a week or so his host, instead of making any effort toward curing him, would only regale him with story after story. The guest's patience finally gave out and he made ready to take his leave, sure that his misgivings had not been mistaken. But as he was leaving, the Baal Shem abruptly called him back, opened a book of scripture to a certain text, and asked him to explain its meaning. This the rabbi did—feeling, perhaps, that his explanation showed much brilliance and learning. Hereupon the Baal Shem declared that the rabbi's interpretation had in no way penetrated into the real soul-meaning of the passage and he, the Baal Shem, went on

to clarify that meaning in a manner so luminous and profound that Baer was shaken.

From that time he became the Besht's disciple, and his chief one. He had come to see that what he had regarded as real knowledge was only a pale reflection of what this master could impart to him. He testifies that he learned from him "secrets" and "unifications" the "language of the birds and the writing of the angels."

The first meeting makes an interesting comparison to that of Swami Vivekananda with his master.

Dov Baer had two great qualifications to carry on the work of his teacher: he was an outstanding intellectual, along with his mystical feeling and insight, and he was a fine organizer. Into everything he poured the dynamism of his nature. He it was who set up school, in his own home, to train the teachers of the third generation of the Hasidim. These teachers are known as zaddikim (singular: zaddik). He it was who gave doctrinal formulation to the Besht's thought. This was a very necessary move, for, although Hasidim emphasized emotion primarily, it needed some system of ideas to give it cohesion as a group and to give it the basis of defense against the opposition. This opposition was long and loud and bitter. It centered in Lithuania and was headed by scholars and talmudists, of whom the most brilliant was the renounced Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna.

(TO BE CONCLUDED)

Here is thy footstool and there rest thy feet where live the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.

Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the humble among the poorest, the lowliest and lost. —*Rabindranath Tagore*

A CHINESE LEGEND

By Ethelwing Webster

In the year of the "Yellow Emperor", about 2697 B.C. there lived on an island in the blue China Sea an old man and his three sons. Their tiny red-roofed mud hut was half hidden by the wide spreading branches of the Buddha-tree, and from this simple peasant home the old Chinaman could look out on his rice-paddies, and at twilight watch the shining stars in the "Great House" of this enchanted Universe feeling how good it was to be a living part of all creation.

He had one sadness and his heart was heavy, for his sons were greedy, lazy and quarrelsome, never wanting to work in the rice fields which were becoming cracked and dry, and brittle as clay.

After a night of prayer the old father called his sons together and told them that when the silver lantern of the night had again lost itself beyond the horizon and the golden disc of the sun was warming the earth he would be leaving them for a long journey to the Sacred Shrine of the Blessed One, there to meditate and give thanks for their many blessings. He pointed to the brown rice-paddies which looked like the hide of some ancient and wrinkled monster and said, "There is precious gold in the rice-fields, and I leave it for you to find and enjoy."

Thinking their father had hidden a treasure box of gold in the fields the brothers started plowing, digging and planting, working day after day until the earth looked as soft as powdered chocolate and was lush with tiny rice shoots, yet nowhere was there to be found the treasure box of gold.

They were so busy they forgot to quarrel and in time the rice was ready to harvest and the big baskets of pearly rice filled the old storehouse to the brim.

Before their father returned a cruel famine came to the land of the "Yellow Emperor", and not even the great mandarins could find rice to eat, but news travels fast on the China Sea tradewinds when people are starving and soon the merchants had heard of the rice the sons had stored in their island home, and came like flocks of hungry snow birds in their queer little sanpans and slipper-boats, exchanging their gold pieces for the precious rice.

The hearts of the sons were touched and seeing the need of the starving people began cultivating all the land their father had given them and soon rice was sent to the far corners of the great kingdom of the "Yellow Emperor."

When their honorable father returned from his long pilgrimage the sons bowed their heads in reverence and deep respect for the wisdom of their venerable father who had shown them the "Wu-Wei" path to happiness and usefulness, and as they ate their rice from their wooden bowls in the quiet of the evening the old Chinaman raised his eyes to the "Great House" sparkling with planets and the mysterious trail of the Milky Way and said, "Tao (God) is good and, Wu-Wei (the Path) is blessed."

He who understands others is intelligent; he who understands himself is enlightened. He who is able to conquer others is powerful; he who can control himself is more powerful. He who is contented is richer than the richest. Those who have purpose are resolute, and those who keep tranquillity of mind have endurance. Those whose fame endures beyond death are immortal.

—*Tao Teh King*

THE WORLD AND THE CLOISTER

By Sister Daya

(An address delivered in the Temple of the Universal Spirit, Ananda Ashrama, La Crescenta, California, on Sunday, July 1, 1951)

Today let us strive together to correct the idea, which some people hold, that the spiritual life, so called, has always to be a segregated life, completely divorced from life in the world where, of necessity, man must seek his sustenance, form his relationships and fulfill his duties. Actually we must know that people would not go to their churches to pray, or in any way seek spiritual aid in time of trouble, did they not feel that religion, in its deepest sense, was for all men to apply in every circumstance. But let us also strive to grasp the need, which at certain times and under certain conditions demands the quiet of the cloister.

To fulfil that need throughout the centuries there have been places set apart—monasteries, convents, retreats—where the spiritual life becomes extremely specialized, so much so that the world, jogging along its own path, has come to feel, more particularly under the impact of scientific materialism, that the isolated way of life of the religious is not needful or desirable, and is in fact a selfish form of escapism. Yet if monasteries and convents persist in spite of this opposition, it is, no doubt, because they fill a real need. Therefore, before imputing motives that may not exist, let us explore that need.

Right at the start we should clearly comprehend that what we call the "life of the spirit" is not just a moralistic life, although it includes the loftiest morals. It is not just being kind to one's neighbor, or being honest, or decent, or charitable. It is that, but it is far more than that, and

it is this "far more" that eludes and baffles the ordinary critics. This, however, does not mean that it is beyond the grasp of any normally intelligent, sincere and aspiring human being.

The spiritual path has many stages, and there is a stage, apparently, when it is needful for a man to be under very protected conditions in order to establish his consciousness upon a higher level.

There once was a seeker who came to Lord Buddha and asked: "How shall I find the path to life everlasting? I know all the Vedas by heart and have not found the Truth." Said the Buddha: "Learning is a good thing; but it availeth not. True wisdom can be acquired by practice only. Practice the truth that thy brother is the same as thou. Walk in the noble path of righteousness and thou wilt understand that while there is death in self there is immortality in Truth." In another portion of his gospel we read: "Great is the fruit, great is the rapture of contemplation when set round with upright conduct. Great is the fruit, great the advantage of intellect when set round with the rapture of contemplation. The mind set round with intelligence is set free from great evils—from sensuality, from rebirth, from delusion and from ignorance."

The Buddha could just as well have reversed his statements and said in essence: "An active, outer life is a good thing, but it availeth not. Life can be truly lived only in the light of wisdom. Great is the fruit of upright conduct when set round with the rapture of contemplation." In both these statements there would be truth. The outer, active life has to be impregnated with a growing awareness of basic spiritual Reality, through a profound inward turning toward that Reality, which is the Source of all manifested existence.

We are apt to take the miracle of life too much for granted. We skim the foam off the surface of the ocean, and ignore the ocean itself. Yet the ocean is there, the ocean of infinitude, to lure and challenge the spirit of man. Inevitably, sooner or later, it captures his imagination, and in his mind questions arise: "Whence am I? Why am I here? What is this life and what lies back of the outer froth of being? These forms of flesh, what animates them, what impels them?"

Who is going to answer? How is man to find his answer? Could he understand the answer were it given? Lacking information on these matters, he plunges in to try to find out for himself, and, like the child, begins by seeking to pull his toy apart to see what makes it go. The botanist pulls the flower apart; the doctor cuts open the body; the physicist splits the atom. The result is a blank so far as ultimate Reality is concerned. The secret is not discovered. The cause has not been found. Will it ever be found by going outward? Can man unveil it by means of analysing, dissecting, weighing and measuring? It is man himself again that will have to answer, and it is exactly that which the mystic is striving to do when he retires for a time from the world.

Three things hem man in as with adamantine walls: Time, Space, Causation. He feels he cannot go beyond these, but unless he does go beyond them, how shall he ever know that Ultimate Truth, that Final Essence, from which even Time, Space and Causation must proceed. That Truth cannot be bound by these mighty Three. It cannot be bound by anything. It must be absolute or nothing.

A gradual awakening to this fact causes man at last to leave his outward searching and turn the flashlight of

his mind within. Feeling his way, he penetrates ever deeper and deeper into the seemingly black depths of his hidden being, hearing like the thunder of the sea, the ancient Vedic Voice proclaiming: "Thou art That! Thou art That Eternal!" and like an undertone, the Grecian high command: "Man, know thyself!"

It should be, you may think, the easiest thing in the world to know one's self. "I know my self," you say. "I am Mary Jones (or John Brown), I have blue eyes and a quick temper. I am tall and strong, and I am an American (or a Frenchman or an Englishman or a Hindu, or whatever it may be). I know myself very well indeed." In some such way each one of us tries to identify himself; yet actually we know that there is something in us which defies identification.

You live in your house of flesh and say, "I am." I, gazing out upon you from my house of flesh, also say, "I am." This sense of "I am" is the most real, the most immediate, the most potent fact for every one of us. We may all be very different in our personalities, but in this feeling of self-identity, we are the same. The real, the basic, the final reality in us—That which knows Itself to be—is the same in every living creature. It is in That that we can meet. It is in That that we become more than brothers—we become one. It is That which unites us, not only with one another, but with all life everywhere.

Thinking of this, a sort of hush of wonder falls upon one, as one gazes at a bird or a flower or a tree. It too, must be aware of its own entity, not consciously aware, but simply aware, inasmuch as it lives and struggles to live. There is, I am convinced, nothing in the universe that has not this primal sense of being. Yet we go on living our isolated, separated lives, shut away from our

common oneness and from one another. At first we seem to thrive on this separated condition; but as our consciousness opens out, we become more and more aware of our vaster possibilities and of our exile from them, the most terrible exile in the world, and the loneliest. No wonder we reach out to touch the hand of a friend, to draw close to him and seek to make him an extension of our own being. Probably the greatest human joy is the truly happy marriage. Yet even when two people, through inward harmony, become so united that they almost seem to think the same thoughts, even then they are held apart by the walls of ego which encompass them, while beyond their little light of partial union stretches the unexplored country of a million souls.

I am placing this picture before you in order to make clear the reason why people who are in the process of awakening from their dream of separation have need of opportunity to plunge into their own being, to broaden their consciousness, to storm the barriers of Causation, Time and Space. How can anyone, you may ask, even imagine going beyond these three limitations which seem to form the very groundwork of the cosmos? Space and Causation, it is true, appear to show us no way out from their dominion; but Time does give us a hint of how we may go "beyond Time." Time is so palpably of the mind, when we come to think about it. It so largely depends on our state of consciousness. To the lover who is parting from his beloved, an hour passes like a minute, while a minute seems an eternity to one enduring intense pain. We find that when we lose the sense of self in some high quest or in some mighty venture, we also, to a great extent, lose our sense of the passage of time. As a corollary to this is the fact that when we are thus carried beyond

the self, we feel free, we begin to be truly happy. The person with spontaneous nature, big vision and abounding love for his fellow creatures is on the road leading to supreme bliss, because in his eagerness for others he has forsaken his ego. On the other hand, those who are afflicted with an acute sense of ego are always miserable and are well on their way to the inferiority complex with its accompanying emotions of envy, hatred and malice.

All the great religions place their accent upon the transcendence of self. The world's mightiest seers and saviours have unceasingly proclaimed that man can pass beyond his limitations, that he can through meditation and right living gain true understanding of life, which will lead him "beyond mind and speech, beyond name and form," back to his Origin.

Unfortunately at the very mention of this possibility, we cry out: "I am afraid! I do not want to lose myself. If I blend with the whole where am *I* going to be?" Thus we cling to the ego which rides upon our shoulders like the Old Man of the Sea. We call it our dearest friend when, if we only knew, it is our greatest enemy, the penny which hides the Sun, a tyrant under whom we suffer constant woes. Our trouble lies in our inability to separate the Self, the pure Essence, from the selfishness of selfhood, the separative ego. We fail to realize that at every moment of time the Power that causes us to speak and act and think comes not from our limited consciousness, but from the central Heart of existence, which is our true being. This being we cannot lose. It would be impossible. We cannot lose That any more than we can lose God, for they are one; but we can lose the awareness of That and see ourself only as a fragment among other fragments.

Sometimes in an optical illusion a single object appears to us as double, but when our sight clears the two again become one. So with life. At present we suffer from a sort of double vision which causes us to see on one side the Eternal Power as Something far off and apart from us, and on the other side, the manifested universe. Through ages of delusion we have become crystallized in this distortion and now do not realize our blindness. The spiritually illumined, however, see "face to face." For them the veil is lifted and they perceive that all is One, that they are That, and that everything is contained in That. When a man hears the imperative call of that indwelling Spirit, he has no choice but to respond to it, even if it means going apart for a time in order to reorient himself. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when a tree is young, we build a little fence around it to protect it from the sheep and goats, but when it reaches maturity, then it can do without a fence and can give shade and shelter to these same flocks and herds.

Unfortunately the world of the mystic does not exist for the man in the street. "A person's religion cannot amount to very much," he will affirm, "unless he can practice it out in the world." And that settles the matter for him. Like Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita,* he speaks "apparent words of wisdom," but has no realization of what they imply. Even for one who seeks spiritual realization and sincerely feels the inward urge, it is all too easy when outer pressure becomes too strong, to fall under the sway of old habits of thought and action. The spiritual plant is a delicate plant and its tender growth at the start can easily be retarded. Therefore for a time it needs to be guarded from the "rough usages of life." For this reason monasteries and convents are built.

Here we come back again to the subject of segregation, which for many folk, busy with their everyday tasks, has cast a shadow of misunderstanding over what they call the "spiritual life." At this point it would be well to recall the illumined words of the Lord Buddha which we have already quoted. Man needs a time for retirement, there is no doubt; but also he needs active work among his fellow men. In order to establish our inward vision we have to apply to outer circumstances the wisdom gained through contemplation. Balance, so all-important, is hard to maintain, and often the mystic shuts himself away too much from outer life, which, it must be remembered, is also part of the One. The rift has come about through excess in both directions—inward and outward. As has been said, there are many stages on the spiritual path. Our mistake is when, on reaching some particular stage, we think that to be the whole of spiritual living.

Swami Vivekananda used to say that religion did not lie in dogma or creed, but in being and becoming. It is through the application of spiritual truth to life's daily problems that one is able to unite being and becoming within oneself and thus attain the status of a whole or holy man.

When Lord Buddha said, "Hatred is never conquered by hatred—hatred is conquered by love" he gave us a wonderful theme for meditation; but we shall never discover its true meaning until we have given it the living test.

One thing is certain: Whether one lives a busy life in the world or strives for God-realization in a cloister, the selfishness or unselfishness of one's choice depends entirely on one's motive. Ask yourself: "What is my vision of human life? How do I picture man's destiny? Is he

just to go on and on to the endless end, involved in political and social upheavals, concentrated on his own little hopes and desires, torn between contending forces of good and evil, with never a solution, or is he moving toward some mighty liberation from all this?" Your answer will depend upon the depth of your understanding. Some men never go beyond their immediate personal problems, the satisfaction of their personal ambitions; but there are others who realize that even though they may be busily, even happily engaged in worldly affairs, yet all the time they are working for a greater objective—something that has to do with the soul of man.

The soul of man has many avenues of attainment. Take the practical worker, for instance. How these great concepts could enlarge his usefulness—could keep him calm when interruptions might cause him to get hot and flurried, thereby losing his efficiency. How the remembrance of the still Spirit within could keep him equal-minded in success and failure, poised in the face of anger and abuse.

The first requisite for creative work is to transmute it into service. That is, to put one's best into one's task, even though it may be of the humblest, laying it symbolically upon the altar as an offering to the Eternal. Remember always that That is the root of all existence. Therefore, when you are washing your dishes or sweeping your floors or dusting your rooms, or whatever you may be doing, feel that you are doing it in and through that One Power, which, whether you know it or not, is forever uniting you with every created thing. The dishes you handle, the table you dust, the dust itself—all are part of that Existence. For this reason you should lay your hands in reverence even upon what you call inanimate ob-

jects. They too are included, and when you go forth, go forth to meet your Self, your God-self, in many different forms.

Another offering you should make is the offering of your decisions. Do you fluctuate back and forth trying to decide which course to follow, and after the decision has been made do you relive over and over again your uncertainty? If you do, you waste your divine energy. Why not put your best judgment into your decision, then offer it once and for all to the Infinite Deity, along with the results which will follow? They are no longer yours. Bind them back to God. In this way, through consecrated action, renunciation of pride and egotism, and the giving over of the fruits of your actions to the One Being, you will be wisely applying great spiritual principles to your life in the world.

How often we speak of our lack of security. But how are we going to find that security in this insecure world unless we become aware of that impregnable Power which remains unaffected by depressions, wars, sickness or even death? You may say, "These are just words." They are, but we can make them living by our life.

Many of you are now preparing to go on your vacations. What will you carry to the woods and to the forests? What will you take with you when you go to the ocean or out into the vast desert? Will your vacation be for you just having a good time, pulling in a few fish, just swimming or dancing, and then coming home more tired than when you set out? Or is yours going to be a real vacation?

Why not make it a vacation from your little self? Think of what it might mean—a two weeks vacation from your plans and schemes, your doubts and fears, your

self-centeredness and nagging worries! I confess that often I have a longing to go to the great ranges, up into the heights, to stand in the midst of the singing pines and smell the balsam. Often I dream of it, and then I ask myself: "Why do I really want to go? What do I think I shall find?" And all at once I realize that the main reason I long for these things is because I have a feeling that out there in those beautiful, far away places something may be liberated within me. I'll feel free in myself, I'll be aware of that oneness more than here at home in the midst of so many *things*. Yet I know that here there is just as open a way to the illimitable as there is there. But perhaps one is not so apt to perceive it. It may be that the reason the wild places seem to set us free is because our mind follows the horizon line or the sky-pointing pine. Standing in the desert we feel that there is nothing to bar our inward flight, that we can go on and on forever.

The greatest instinct in the human heart is to be free. Today, being so near our Independence Day, I had thought to read you the preamble to the Bill of Rights. I have not done so, but I would like to remind you that Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Thought, Freedom of Worship, and Freedom of Assembly are wonderful only to the extent that we who enjoy them are inwardly free. Slaves never know freedom, and the greatest slavery is enslavement to the little self with its narrow confined consciousness.

Make a resolve that you will strive to attain the greater freedom, and be more aware of the One Life that unites and liberates us all. Imbued with this sense of oneness, may you touch with reverence the trunks of the trees and sense your kinship with the earth under your feet and

the air around you. As you watch the small creatures working and playing may you feel your identity with their "will to live" which moves them even as it moves you.

May your movements be controlled, your thoughts quiet and your voice gentle. In India there is a path of *Yoga* known as *Mantra Yoga*. It has to do with the spiritual use of voice and speech through the *mantra* or chant. There is great power in the Sanskrit chant—power both through the sacred words and through the vocal tone. It can lift one to a more exalted state of being. We may not be Yogis, but in our small way we can prepare ourselves for *Mantra Yoga*. Sound actually creates form. Also it can shatter it, and beyond the sound is the equally double-edged thought. By your spoken words you may be hurting or helping your fellow creatures.

Let us try then not to injure in this way the lives about us. Rather let our voice and lips be graced quite constantly with utterance that is kind, lofty and beautiful, proving that we truly are temples of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us.

Is not this bringing spiritual practice down into everyday life? Never mind obstacles. Man has to transcend. The wrestler goes out and wrestles in order to develop his skill and his strength. We wrestle with life and our skill comes through vision and right understanding. The Call has sounded. The Word has gone forth from the Heart of the Universe: "Come up higher! Go in deeper! Be your true Self!"

Whether we live out among men or dwell in a hermitage, let us respond, each in his own way. For in that Universal Self alone shall we find peace, beauty, bliss and the Truth which sets man free.

FROM A DISCIPLE'S NOTEBOOK

(Continued from the Spring Issue)

On Tuesday, August 10th, 1926, the Swami's words at the morning session of the Summer School were somehow unrecorded and went to join the lost words of the endless past ages. The disciple likes to picture them, those pure and holy words of his, as entering into the Cosmic Hall of Forgotten Utterances, like a light and a fragrance.

Of course in that hall lost words of the Christ shine with a marvelous luster; loving, gentle words of St. Francis radiate comfort and peace, while the Buddha's wise and powerful statements still cast their glow down the shadow-filled halls of Time.

It is a crowded hall, this Hall of Forgotten Utterances, and the words of the spiritually illumined have to hold the balance against dark and terrible threats, spoken long ago in secret, against words of evil intent, warlike words, cruel words, and oceans of mere chatter.

Therefore the Swami's words, lost on that August morning, slipped into that place of vast assemblage with the beauty and radiancy and simplicity of a spring day, and soon blended their beams with the light of the Great Luminaries that, seen or unseen, known or unknown, shine to help the world. All of which is not an attempt at philosophy, but a pure fantasy, written in appreciation and love.

So with this preable, let us turn to the afternoon meeting, out under the acacia tree. The Swami is speaking, the students are listening and the birds are hopping about.

(The Swami intones a Sanskrit chant)

Swami: Sound has a very great influence upon our

lives. That knowledge was the origin of all our sacred music. It was the origin of the chant—to help people concentrate the mind. Through all the sacred classics we find that idea of expression through music.

Hindus also possessed the concept of the Word, the AUM. It is not to be taken literally, but as That which expresses the Absolute. The Hindus thought of it that way. From the technical side we find that all sounds are contained in It; but we should try to get the essence. Spiritual study means getting the essence and not merely following rational or mental lines. In the subtler provinces of life, intellect is like a glaring light: it cannot enter. But the gentler, tenderer aspects can enter there. Devotion, expressing the finer feelings of the heart, always carries one deeper, to the more intimate aspects of being.

The perfect state is where heart and intellect are balanced. Wherever there is balance in a person, that person is more equipped for higher knowledge. Where you find perfect balance, there you find attainment.

We waste our energies, and for nothing. Those who throw away nervous energy through lack of balance suffer the reaction.

(Swami reads from the *Bhagavad Gita*)

He who sees Me in all and all in Me, from him I vanish not, nor does he vanish from Me.

Swami: God is all-loving, omniscient, all-pervading! If we could understand the significance of these sayings, it would transform our life. When the Lord enters our consciousness, He shines forth, even in the face of evil. Whenever we accept an Infinite Being there is no room left for anything else. There is nothing outside of Infinitude. When people begin to fall under the delusion of "my God and thy God," the allness ceases.

Let thy heart, like the flower, blossom with love
And give to the world peace perpetual and abiding joy.

When we forget our complex nature and relate ourselves wholly to the Supreme, a sense of peace and rest falls upon us. Outside darkness and distress cannot count for us if we have inward light, and the inward light comes through our knowledge of the Supreme. This knowledge can be gained only when the heart is humble and receptive and turned towards God.

Swami: Humility is the first step towards the spiritual life. Sri Ramakrishna gives the illustration of the rainwater. The rainwater always settles in the low places. Although the blessing of the Lord is ever falling upon all, it is only where there is humility that it settles. This does not mean that the Lord deprives anyone of His blessings; they are ever descending upon every living creature. It means that we must learn to receive and retain them. We do this when we acquire true humility of soul.

The greatest misfortune for man is when he feels that he has no need of God, no need of Truth. If our body and our possessions cause us to forget Him, then they are misleading us.

(Swami reads prayer)

O Infinite Spirit of the Universe,
Thou art my one safe Shelter!
Thou art my one sure Refuge from the distractions of this world.
Help me never to forget that Thou art the root of my life;
My strength and joy depend wholly upon Thy grace;
Bestow that grace upon me out of Thy infinite mercy.

Swami: The world cannot distract us when we stay close to that Spirit. We must keep on aspiring, and remember, there must be no discouragement.

Yoga means union—*Unio Mystica*. It signifies that all the barriers have been removed, all the veils that separate the individual soul from its mystic Source have been drawn aside.

A person who carries the torch of Truth and the cheerful spirit of God-consciousness, why even were he taken to the darkest place one could imagine, his own spirit would enlighten it. A person who has real wisdom, he carries light and lightness—lightness in expression, lightness in speech, lightness in bearing—and *Anandam*, bliss. If we can become partakers of this, surely we can fill our little dwellings, our homes, with light and happiness.

How can we make anything productive till our life is filled with illumination and with strength? If our inner life is not filled, our outer life will be empty.

"He who regards pleasure and pain in the light of self-comparison, that person is highly esteemed." We feel our own pain keenly, also our pleasure, but that person who can feel for others in the same way, who cannot say anything harsh to another because quickly he thinks, "How would I feel if that were said to me?" he fulfills these words of the *Bhagavad Gita*: he is highly esteemed.

Unless we have this type of consciousness, we shall have glimpses of Truth, but we shall not be able to hold on to them. We believe in unselfishness; we believe in love; yet we become unloving. We know how harsh words hurt; yet too often we tend to use them. One who feels the pains and pleasures of another as if they were his own, attains the Truth. Such a person can never be indifferent to the needs of those about him.

Nothing happens accidentally. When one suffers, it is not through accident; but if we should, on the strength of this, fold our hands and just let someone die without any effort on our part to save him, we should be making for ourselves bad *karma*. A knowledge of science without the expression of feeling, shows a one-sided development. When all a person's faculties—hands, feet, mind, brain, heart, everything—are working for one principle, that person cannot go astray.

We are forever looking for miracles. But even if through some unusual circumstance we are cured of an illness, that illness will come again if the cause is not removed. The cause of illness is ignorance, selfishness, cruelty, greed and all negative and destructive instincts.

In the spiritual life we are given aid, but after that we must not go to sleep. Rather there should be a sense of gratitude and a resolve to keep our inner being cleansed and shining. Spiritual ardor will help us do this. It is the greatest benefit on the spiritual path.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

O great benefactor, who shows us the way! And yet, though all men have raised temples and altars to Triptolemus for teaching us the cultivation of the crops, what man of you ever set up an altar in honor of him who found the truth and brought it to light and published it among all men—not the truth of mere living, but the truth that leads to right living? Who ever dedicated a shrine or an image for this gift, or worships God for it? I say, shall we, who offer sacrifices because the gods gave us wheat or the vine, never give thanks to God that they produced this manner of fruit in the mind of men, whereby they were to show us the true way of happiness?

—*Epictetus*

REPORT

VEDANTA CENTRE — ANANDA ASHRAMA
COHASSET AND BOSTON, MASS.

Spring has been full for the Vedanta Centre with its varied program of uninterrupted activities. Beginning from April the Sunday Morning Service was resumed in Cohasset while the hour of the second Service in Boston was changed from afternoon to the evening. The interest in the "Gita" Class, held on Thursdays in Boston, remains vital and strong. The discussion period which follows the lecture is providing considerable stimulus and helpfulness to the faithful group.

On April 16th, Good Friday was observed appropriately and Easter followed with its characteristic exaltation. Of the three public Services of Easter the Sunrise Worship was the most impressive. Its setting was the out-of-doors, bright with clear sunshine after the night's heavy rain. Srimati Gayatri Devi chanted the Vedic Hymn of Immortality in Sanskrit with an accompaniment of the singing birds. The themes of her sermons were: "The Christ Ascended," "Song of Immortality," and "Born Again."

Lord Buddha's Birthday was celebrated on Sunday, May 23rd. It was a happy occasion. The beautiful standing statue of Buddha was placed in the garden where the Service was held in an atmosphere of fragrant lilacs. Among the congregation were a number of Sunday School children from the Unitarian Church of Hingham. They listened with rapt attention to the life story of "The Light of Asia" which was Gayatri Devi's subject for the sermon.

On Friday, May 7th, Swami Nikhilananda, who is in

charge of The Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York, paid a surprise visit to the Ashrama. His coming was a real inspiration to the Vedanta Centre's resident community. He took an interest in all the recent improvements on the place and exclaimed again and again about its peace and beauty.

VEDANTA OUTSIDE THE CENTRE

As a service to the Universalist Meeting House where Vedanta Centre now holds its Services in Boston, a program was presented on Friday, April 9th. Srimati Gayatri Devi prepared a Hindu dinner for nearly a hundred persons who were the guests of the Universalist group, gave a talk on Festivals in India following which Mrs. Eugene Redmond showed colored moving pictures of India.

On three occasions Srimati Gayatri Devi has been the guest of the local Unitarian Church. On Frebruary 28th she addressed its American Youth group; on April 15th she conducted one of the Lenten Services for the Women's Alliance and again spoke on "When East meets West" at their Inter-faith committee meeting before a large gathering of women on Tuesday, May 11th.

On Monday, April 19th, Gayatri Devi was among a group of ministers representing Universalist and Unitarian faiths. Her subject was "A Minister's Approach to Religion—Vedanta View." The meeting was held at the parish house of the First Parish Unitarian Church of Scituate, Mass. The occasion was informal and Gayatri Devi answered many questions on India and her multiple faiths.

On the evening of April 20th, Arlington Street Church of Boston under the leadership of Dr. Dana M. Greeley held its Inter-faith Panel Discussion. Five religions were

represented and the speakers, of whom Gayatri Devi was one, participated in a very stimulating program of discussion on the five great religions of the world.

The lecture on Monday, May 17th, was before the Field and Forest Club in Boston. Gayatri Devi's subject was "India Old and New." She addressed a large and responsive audience.

During Memorial Day week-end Gayatri Devi was in Rochester, New York, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chester F. Carlson, two enthusiastic followers of Vedanta. While there Gayatri Devi served as the speaker in the morning service of the historic First Unitarian Church of Rochester, under the leadership of Dr. David Rhys Williams. It was of this particular church that Susan B. Anthony was a member for over a half-century and the church has a long history of taking the leadership in better understanding between religions. Because of Gayatri Devi's lecture on this morning so much interest was evidenced that a request was made for a further opportunity to hear Gayatri Devi. Two select groups met on two successive days in the Carlson home: a group of women during the afternoon of June 1st and a group of physical scientists and their wives came on the evening of June 2nd. Gayatri Devi lectured informally on both these occasions and a question period followed each lecture.

ANANDA ASHRAMA, LA CRESCENTA, CALIFORNIA

The days and months pass swiftly at the California Ashrama, marked by activities of various sorts. On Friday night, March 26th, a piano recital was given by Mr. Amiram Rigai. Mr. Rigai's program was a varied and difficult one including works from the pen of Cesar Franck, Beethoven, Debussy and Prokofieff—all bril-

liantly performed. The Ashrama and its many friends who attended are deeply grateful to Mr. Rigai.

This recital was given as a benefit for the Ashrama radio series which ran for thirteen weeks over radio station KALI in Pasadena.

On Thursday night, April 8th, in place of the regular Thursday night class, Miss Iris Gabrielle, long time friend of Ananda Ashrama, was guest speaker. Everyone was deeply moved by her story and most particularly by her earnest desire to give some real and practical aid for the children who are starving all around the world.

Good Friday was observed by the usual public Service at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Sister Daya's talk on the significance of the Crucifixion was one to be remembered.

Easter morning at Ananda Ashrama dawned bright and beautiful, making the Sunrise Service, held each year in the Temple patio, one of special joy and inspiration. Sister Daya's uplifting words, mingled with bird calls, running water and morning breezes, gave real spiritual food to the many early risers who attended this Service. A large number stayed to enjoy breakfast together at the Community House. At the 11 o'clock Service Sister Daya's subject was "Who Was the Christ?" The Temple was crowded for this Service on the Cosmic Christ, and many stayed to luncheon. It was an appreciative group that gathered in the afternoon to hear the talk on "Everyman's Saviour."

On the 2nd of May the California Ashrama celebrated her 31st birthday. Sister Daya's subjects for the occasion were: "In Sacred Trust" and "Our Unfolding Dream."

On Sunday, May 16th, the birthday of the Lord Buddha was observed. Everyone found the talks on the life and teachings of the "Blessed One" full of both education and inspiration.